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About Michel Thomas

Michel Thomas (1914–2005) was a gifted linguist who mastered more than ten languages in his lifetime and became famous for teaching much of Hollywood's 'A' list how to speak a foreign language. Film stars such as Woody Allen, Emma Thompson and Barbra Streisand paid thousands of dollars each for face-to-face lessons.

Michel, a Polish Jew, developed his method after discovering the untapped potential of the human mind during his traumatic wartime experiences. The only way he survived this period of his life, which included being captured by the Gestapo, was by concentrating and placing his mind beyond the physical. Fascinated by this experience, he was determined that after the war he would devote himself to exploring further the power of the human mind, and so dedicated his life to education.

In 1947, he moved to Los Angeles and set up the Michel Thomas Language Centers, from where he taught languages for over fifty years in New York, Beverly Hills and London.

Michel Thomas died at his home in New York City on Saturday 8th January 2005. He was 90 years old.



Perfect Dutch index

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CD I Track 1

goedemorgen = 'good morning'; *goedemiddag* = 'good afternoon'; *goedenavond* = 'good evening'.

mij = 'me' (stressed); *jullie doen het voor mij* = 'you (plural) are doing it for me'.

CD I Track 2

jou = 'you' (stressed); *ik doe het niet voor jou* = 'I'm not doing it for you'.

CD I Track 3

van = 'of'; *het is van jou* = 'it is yours'; *van wie is dit?* = 'of who(m) is it?' = 'whose is it?'
kan je me even helpen? = 'can you (just) help me?' = 'could you help me?' The final -n in words ending in -en (*even*, *helpen*) is often not sounded.

CD I Track 4

kon = 'could' (past tense of *kunnen* 'to be able'). The forms for 'I', 'you' (singular), 'he', 'she' and 'it' are the same in the past tense of *kunnen*.

lang = 'long' (time), *al lang* = 'already for a long time', *altijd* = 'always'.

CD I Track 5

The present tense can be used for the future: *Ik werk morgen niet* = 'I'm not working tomorrow' and 'I won't work tomorrow'. Alternatively, you can use the verb *gaan* (to go): *ik ga morgen niet werken* = 'I am not going to work tomorrow'.

To say you have to do something, you use the verb *moeten*: *ik moet het morgen doen* = 'I have to do it tomorrow'.

To say you promise that you're going to do something, you use the verb *zullen*: *ik zal het morgen doen* = 'I will / shall do it tomorrow'.

CD I Track 6

zal ik het doen? = 'shall I do it?' *laten we gaan* = 'let's go'; *laten we naar Amsterdam gaan* = 'let's go to Amsterdam'.

CD I Track 7

waar ga je naartoe? = 'where are you going (towards)?'; *ga je daar naartoe?* = 'are you going there (towards)?'

huis = 'house'; *thuis* = 'at home'; *ik ga naar huis* = 'I am going home'; *laten we thuis blijven* = 'let's stay at home'.



CD I Track 8

glas (het) = 'glass (the)'; *ik wil graag een glas water* = 'I would like a glass (of) water' – the 'of' is omitted in Dutch.

staan = 'to stand'; *ik sta hier* = 'I am standing here'; *liggen* = 'to lie'; *ik ga liggen* = 'I am going to lie (down)'. *Zitten*, *liggen* and *staan* are often used in Dutch to indicate position, as in *het glas staat daar* = 'the glass is (standing) there'.

boek (het) = 'book (the)', plural *boeken*.

CD I Track 9

er = an unstressed form of *daar* 'there'; *hij zit er* = 'he's sitting there'; *er is geen tijd* = 'there's no time'.

huizen = 'houses'; *er staan veel huizen* = 'there are many houses'.

CD I Track 10

erop = 'on (it)'; *de kat zit erop* = 'the cat is (sitting) on it'.

All diminutives are *het* words: *het katje ligt erop* = 'the little cat / kitten is lying on it'.

CD I Track 11

hoe gaat het? = 'how are you?' (literally 'how goes it?').

hen = 'them' (stressed form; unstressed form is *ze*); *hoe gaat het met hen* = 'how is it going with them? = 'how are they?'

alles gaat heel goed met me = 'everything is going very well with me' = 'I'm fine'.

CD I Track 12

halen = 'to get' or 'to fetch'; *ophalen* = 'to pick up', with emphasis or stress on the prefix *op-*. In such verbs the stressed prefix breaks off when the verb is not used in its 'to' form: *ik haal het voor je op* = 'I'll pick it up for you'; *we halen het voor jullie op* = 'we'll pick it up for you' (plural).

herhalen = 'to repeat'. The emphasis is on *-ha-*, not on the prefix *her-*. In such verbs the unstressed prefix does not break off: *ze herhaalt het altijd* = 'she always repeats it'.

kijken = 'to look' or 'to watch'; *kijk uit!* = 'look out!'; *hij mag wel kijken maar jij niet* = 'he is allowed to watch but you are not'.

CD I Track 13

kijken naar = 'to look at / to watch'; *(de) film* = '(the) film'; *ik kijk naar de film* = 'I'm watching the film'; *ze kijkt ernaar* = 'she's looking at it'.

uitkijken = 'to look out'; *uitkijken naar* = 'to look forward to'; the *uit* is stressed and therefore breaks off: *ze kijkt ernaar uit* = 'she's looking forward to it'.

CD 1 Track 14

ik mag het hebben = 'I am allowed to have it' = 'I can have it'; *ik mocht het hebben* = 'I was allowed to have it'; *jullie mochten het zien* = 'you (all) were allowed to see it'.
moeten = 'have to'; *moesten* = 'had to'; *ze moesten het hebben* = 'they had to have it'.
Ik mocht dat niet (doen) = 'I wasn't allowed to do that'; the second verb *doen* is sometimes dropped, as in English ('I wasn't allowed'). This also happens with some other common verbs, such as *komen*, *gaan* and *hebben*: *mochten ze binnen (komen)?* = 'were they allowed (to come) in?'

CD 1 Track 15

terug = 'back', as in *teruggaan* = 'to go back'; *zullen we teruggaan?* = 'shall we go back?';
rug = 'back' (i.e. part of the body).

To add emphasis in English, we will often start a sentence with something other than the person or thing doing the action (technically known as the 'subject'), as in 'No longer am I putting up with this' (instead of 'I am putting up with this no longer'). When this happens in English we swap the order of the subject and verb: 'am I' instead of 'I am'. This 'special swap' also happens in Dutch whenever we start the sentence with something other than the subject: *Dat weet ik al* = 'that I know already' = 'I already know that'.

CD 1 Track 16

nu weet ik het = 'now I know it'; it is quite common to start a sentence with a 'time' phrase. This is not the subject so it triggers a 'special swap'.
misschien = 'maybe' or 'perhaps'; *misschien komt ze ook* = 'perhaps she'll come too / she might come too'; *ook niet* 'not either': *ik doe het ook niet* = 'I'm not doing it either';
morgen doe ik het ook niet = 'I'm not doing it tomorrow either'.

CD 2 Track 1

ik kom als ik tijd heb = 'I'll come if I have time'; but *als ik tijd heb, kom ik* = 'if I have time, I'll come'. *als ik tijd heb* can be seen as a single idea. As it is at the beginning of the sentence, it triggers a 'special swap'.
ik denk dat het niet belangrijk is = 'I think that it's not important'.

CD 2 Track 2

met = 'with', but when it is put together with another word it becomes *mee*: *ik wil meedoen* = 'I want to join in'; *je mag later meekomen* = 'you can / are allowed to come (along) later'.
ze blijven vandaag, hoop ik = 'they're going to stay today, I hope'.

CD 2 Track 3

het is saai, vind ik = 'it's boring, I find'; final 'd' sounds like 't'.

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vroeg = 'early'; *het is te vroeg om te drinken* = 'it's too early to drink'. As with *beter* and *later*, the comparative ('more early') is made by adding *-er*: *vroeger* = 'earlier' (in the past).

niets was vroeger beter = 'nothing was better in the past'; but *vroeger was niets beter* = 'in the past, nothing was better'.

moeilijker = 'more difficult'; *leuker* = 'more fun'; the final *-r* in comparative forms should always be pronounced.

CD 2 Track 4

vroeger had ik goede vrienden = 'earlier (in the past) I had good friends' = 'I used to have good friends'.

dan = 'than': *hij doet het beter dan zij* = 'he does it better than she (does)'.

CD 2 Track 5

ik zou het niet doen = 'I wouldn't do it'; *ik zou dat kunnen doen* = 'I would be able to do that'.

combineren = 'to combine'; *ze zouden dat niet kunnen doen* = 'they wouldn't be able to do that'.

CD 2 Track 6

nooit = 'never': *wij zouden dat nooit willen doen* = 'we would never want to do that'.

nog = 'still'; *het regent nog* = 'it is still raining'.

CD 2 Track 7

nog iets = 'still something' = 'something else': *wil je nog iets drinken?* = 'would you like something else to drink?'; *nog niet* = 'still not' = 'not yet': *ik spreek het nog niet* = 'I don't speak it yet'; *ik weet het nog* = 'I know it still' = 'I remember it'.

CD 2 Track 8

ik heb het = 'I have it': the final *-b* sounds like a 'p'; *nodig* = 'need'; *ik heb het nodig* = 'I have it needy' = 'I need it'.

To say that you have, or had, done something in the past, you 'dive into the past' using the verb *hebben*, 'to have', plus (usually) the sound of the form of the verb that goes with *hij*, *ze* or *het* (e.g. *zegt*), prefixed by *ge-* (e.g. *gezegd*). Note that *gezegd* sounds like *gezegt* because the final *-d* sounds like *-t*.

This 'diving' or *ge-* part of the verb (the past participle) goes at the end of the phrase or sentence: *ik heb het gezegd* = 'I said (have said) it'; *ik had het gezegd* = 'I had said it'.

CD 2 Track 9

hij leert Nederlands = 'he is learning Dutch'; *hij heeft Nederlands geleerd* = 'he learnt (has learnt) Dutch'.

in het Engels = 'in English'; *hoe zeg je dat in het Engels?* = 'how do you say that in English?'; *ik heb het nog niet geleerd* = 'I haven't learnt it yet'; *ze had het nog nooit geleerd* = 'she had never (before in her life) learnt it'; *ik heb hem gisteravond gebeld* = 'I rang (called) him last night'.

CD 2 Track 10

ooit = 'ever'; *heb je dat ooit geleerd?* = 'have you ever learnt that?'; *hij heeft het haar gezegd* = 'he has told her'; *heb je ooit in Amsterdam gewerkt?* = 'have you ever worked in Amsterdam?'

mooi = both 'beautiful' and 'beautifully'; *je hebt dat mooi gezegd* = 'you said that beautifully'.

CD 2 Track 11

maken = 'to make'; *hij heeft het klaargemaakt* = 'he (has) made it ready' = 'he's got it ready'.

With the trigger verbs *willen* and *kunnen*, a *t* sound (final *-d*) is added to the verb form to make the diving form: *ik heb het gewild* = 'I have wanted it'.

wachten op = 'to wait for'; *ik heb op je gewacht* = 'I have waited for you'.

CD 2 Track 12

For verbs with unstressed prefixes like *herhalen*, we don't add *ge-* to form the 'diving' past: *hij heeft het nog nooit herhaald* = 'he has never repeated it yet'; *betalen* = 'to pay': *hij betaalt altijd* = he always pays; *hij heeft altijd betaald* = 'he has always paid'.

CD 2 Track 13

ontdekken = 'to discover' has an unstressed prefix, so doesn't get a *ge-* in the 'diving past': *ze heeft dat nog niet ontdekt* = 'she hasn't discovered that yet'.

CD 2 Track 14

een beetje = 'a little bit (of)'; *het is een beetje moeilijk* = 'it's a bit difficult'; *zo* = 'so': *het is niet zo moeilijk* = 'it's not so difficult'; *heel veel* = 'very much': *wij hebben heel veel geleerd* = 'we've learnt very much'.

CD 2 Track 15

ik zou het hebben = 'I would have it' or 'I was supposed to have it'; *ik zou het voor hem vragen* = 'I would ask it for him' or 'I was supposed to ask it for him' – the context determines the meaning.

jullie zouden het vragen, maar wij hebben het gevraagd = 'you were supposed to ask it, but we asked it'; *ik heb het hem gevraagd* = 'I asked him it'.
ik zou het gevraagd hebben = 'I would have asked it'; there is a shorter way to say this: *ik had het gevraagd*; again, the context determines whether 'I had asked it' or 'I would have asked it' is meant.

CD 2 Track 16

kopen = 'to buy'; it is an irregular verb and the form that we dive into ('bought' in English) is not *gekoopt* but *gekocht*: *ze hadden het gekocht als ze konden* = 'they would have bought it if they could'.

In Dutch, time comes before place: *ik heb het gisteren in Amsterdam gekocht* = 'I bought it in Amsterdam yesterday'; you could also say: *gisteren heb ik het in Amsterdam gekocht*.

CD 3 Track 1

gedaan = done: *je hebt het gedaan* = 'you have done it' or 'you did it'; *graag gedaan* = 'done with pleasure' = 'my pleasure!'

For some verbs the 'diving past' is formed by putting *ge-* in front of the whole verb: *gegeven* = 'given'; *gezien* = 'seen'; *gewassen* = 'washed'; *gestaan* = 'stood'; *gegaan* = 'gone'; *gekomen* = 'come'; we will say that other verbs that fit this pattern can be put in the 'given box'.

CD 3 Track 2

ik weet niet of ze het gewassen hebben or *ik weet niet of ze het hebben gewassen* = 'I don't know if (whether) they've washed it'.

CD 3 Track 3

haasten = 'hurry': *ze moest zich haasten* = 'she needed to hurry (herself)'; *ik heb me gehaast* = 'I have hurried (myself)'; *hij moest zich wassen* = 'he had to have a wash'.

CD 3 Track 4

ze haalt het voor ons = 'she is fetching it for us'; *ik heb het voor haar gehaald* = 'I have fetched it for her'; *jullie moesten het ophalen* = 'you (all) had to pick it up'.

With a verb like *ophalen*, where the prefix is stressed, in the diving past the prefix breaks off and is put before the *ge-*: *ik heb het opgehaald* = 'I have picked it up'.

klaarmaken = 'to make something ready'; *hij heeft het klaargemaakt* = 'he has prepared it'.

CD 3 Track 5

hij heeft het schoongemaakt = 'he cleaned it'; *ze hebben niet meegedaan* = 'they didn't join in'.

CD 3 Track 6

As *mooi* = 'beautiful', *mooier* = 'more beautiful', so *mooist* = 'most beautiful'. An -e is added when the adjective is placed before the thing it describes: *dit is de mooiste kat* = 'this is the most beautiful cat'.

best = 'best'; *haar beste vriend* = 'her best friend'.

zullen is also used for prediction: *zij zal het (wel) doen* = 'she will do it, I expect'.

ik denk dat zij het zou doen = 'I think she would do it'; *wij zouden het mogen zien* = 'we would be allowed to see it'.

CD 3 Track 7

If you are using the 'diving past' of a trigger verb, and you want to follow it with another verb, you use both of them in the 'to' form (infinitive): *ik heb dat willen doen* = 'I have to want to do that' = 'I have wanted to do that'; *ik heb het haar laten zien* = 'I have let her see it' = 'I showed it to her'.

CD 3 Track 8

ik had het niet willen doen = 'I hadn't wanted to do it'.

hoeven + niet + te = 'to not have to'; *jullie hoeven niet te gaan* = 'you don't have to go';

ik hoef niet te gaan = 'I don't have to go'; *hij hoeft niet te betalen* = 'he doesn't have to pay'.

CD 3 Track 9

ik kon het kopen = 'I could (was able to) buy it'; *ik zou het morgen kunnen kopen* = 'I could (would be able to) buy it tomorrow'.

CD 3 Track 10

ik had het kunnen kopen = 'I could have bought it'; *je had iets kunnen zeggen* =

'you could have said something'; *je had iets moeten doen* = 'you should have done something'.

CD 3 Track 11

jullie hadden iets mogen zeggen = 'you would have been allowed to say something';

ik vind het leuk om te doen = 'I find it nice to do it' = 'I like to do it'; *het zou leuk zijn om je te zien* = 'it would be nice to see you'.

CD 3 Track 12

zal ik het laten repareren? = 'shall I let it be repaired?' = 'shall I have it repaired?'

waar was je? = 'where were you?'; *er was eens* = 'there was once' = 'once upon a time'.

Het is een goede vraag = 'it's a good question'; *het zijn goede vragen* = 'they are good questions'.

CD 3 Track 13

Some verbs, such as many verbs dealing with change or coming and going, use the verb *zijn* 'to be' to form the 'diving past': *ik ben gegaan, je bent gegaan, hij / zij is gegaan* = 'I am (have) / you are (have) / he / she is (has) gone' or 'I / you / he / she went'; *we / jullie / zij zijn gegaan* = 'we / you / they are (have) gone' or 'we / you / they went'; *waar ben je naartoe gegaan?* = 'where are you gone to?' = 'where have you gone (to)?'; *we zijn laat uitgegaan* = 'we went out late'.

CD 3 Track 14

ik ben gekomen = 'I have come'; *hij komt morgen aan* = 'he's arriving tomorrow'; *hoe laat zijn ze aangekomen?* = 'at what time did they arrive?'; *ik hoop dat hij terugkomt* = 'I hope that he's coming back'.

CD 3 Track 15

beginnen = 'to begin'; *begonnen* = 'begun'; *wij zijn gisteren begonnen* = 'we began yesterday'; *worden* = 'to become' or 'to get'; *ik word moe* = 'I'm getting tired'; *hij zal moe worden* = 'he'll become tired'; *het is mooi geworden* = 'it has become beautiful (nice)'.

CD 3 Track 16

zijn = 'to be' and *blijven* = 'to stay' also dive into *zijn*: *waar ben je geweest?* = 'where have you been?'; *wij zijn nog nooit in Amsterdam geweest* = 'we've never been in Amsterdam'; *waar was hij geweest?* = 'where had he been?'; *we waren daar geweest* = 'we had been there'.

CD 4 Track 1

ik heb het gezegd = 'I have said it'; *ik zou het zeggen als ik daar geweest was* = 'I would say (it) if I had been there'; *ik had het gezegd als ik daar geweest was* = 'I would have said (it) if I had been there'.

hij is aangekomen = 'he has arrived'; *je zou het geweten hebben (or je had het geweten) als hij aangekomen was* = 'you would have known it if he had arrived'.

CD 4 Track 2

ik ben lang gebleven = 'I (have) stayed a long time'; *wij blijven maar een dag* = 'we are staying but one day' = 'we are only staying one day'; *ik was gebleven* = 'I had stayed' or 'I would have stayed'. For 'would have', therefore, verbs of coming and going will use *was* or *waren*, while the others will use *had* or *hadden*. *wij waren al begonnen* = 'we had already started'.



CD 4 Track 3

ik heb het geprobeerd = 'I have tried it'; *het was goed geweest* = 'it would have been good'.

het was mogelijk geweest om het te doen, als wij vroeger begonnen waren = 'it would have been possible to do it if we had started earlier'.

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CD 4 Track 4

Like in English, there is often a pattern to the vowel changes in the past tenses. Here *ij* 'dives' into *e*: *kijken* = 'to look' → *gekeken*; *begrijpen* = 'to understand' → *begrepen*; and *i* 'dives' into *o*: *drinken* = 'to drink' → *gedronken*; *vinden* = 'to find' → *gevonden*. *koffie* = 'coffee'.

CD 4 Track 5

ga even weg = 'go away (for a moment)'; *ga even zitten* = 'just go and sit down (for a moment)'; *gaat u zitten*, said without a questioning intonation, is a polite request to someone to sit down; *komt u binnen* = 'come in' (polite).

wil je dat ik dit doe? = 'do you want that I do this?' = 'do you want me to do this?'

CD 4 Track 6

leven = 'to live (be alive)'; *het leven* = '(the) life'; *hij leeft* = 'he lives'; *hij heeft lang geleefd* = 'he has lived a long time'.

eten = 'to eat'; *het eten* = 'food'; *het eten had beter kunnen zijn* = 'the food could have been better'.

CD 4 Track 7

wachten = 'to wait'; *het wachten* = 'the waiting'; nouns like these which are formed from the 'to' form of the verb are all *het* words, like *het huis*, *het boek*.

All plurals are *de* words: *de katten* = 'the cats', as are all words ending in *-atie*: *de combinatie* = 'the combination'.

When you refer back to a *de* word, you have to use *hij* or *hem* to mean 'it' instead of *het*: *de situatie wordt slecht* = 'the situation is becoming bad'; *hij (de situatie) is slecht geworden* = 'it (the situation) has become bad'.

CD 4 Track 8

van mij = 'mine'; *de kat is van mij* = 'the cat is mine'; *hij is van mij maar ik wil hem niet* = 'it's mine, but I don't want it' (even if the cat is female).

de weg = 'the road'; *het is de goede weg* = 'it is the right road'.

dat = 'that' when it refers to *het* words: *het is het katje dat ik gekocht*

heb = 'it is the little cat that I bought'. With a *de* word, 'that' becomes *die* instead of *dat*; both *dat* and *die* have the *omdat* effect: *het is de kat die ik gekocht heb* = 'it is the cat that I bought'.



de auto = 'the car'; *die auto is van mij* = 'that car is mine'.

CD 4 Track 9

hebben = 'to have' 'dives' into *gehad*: *ik heb het gehad* = 'I have had it';

de kans = 'the chance': *ik heb nooit de kans gehad* = 'I've never had the chance'.

Words ending in *-ing* are also *de* words: *woning* = 'place that you live / accommodation';

het is een mooie woning = 'it is a beautiful place / residence / house'.

With *het* words you don't add *-e* to the adjective before the noun when it's with *een* = 'a': *een nieuw huis* = 'a new house'.

CD 4 Track 10

ik weet het nog = 'I still know (it)' = 'I remember'; *toen* = 'when', as in 'the period when': *toen ik jong was* = 'when I was young'.

With many verbs the (descriptive) past tense, e.g. 'I did something' (repeatedly) or 'used to do something', contrasted with the 'diving past' *ik heb iets gedaan* = 'I have done something' or 'I did something' (on one occasion), can be made by adding *-de* or *-den* (or sometimes *-te* or *-ten*) to the stem ('I' form) of the verb. This we shall call 'wading' into the past: *ik wilde het doen* = 'I wanted to do it'; *wij wilden het doen* = 'we wanted to do it'; *ik wachtte* = 'I waited'; *wij wachtten* = 'we waited'.

CD 4 Track 11

Some verbs don't form the 'wading' past in this way: *kunnen* → *kon / konden*, *moeten* → *moest / moesten*, *mogen* → *mocht / mochten*, *worden* → *werd / werden*.

CD 4 Track 12

De auto is gewassen = 'the car is (has been) washed': in Dutch, 'it is' and 'it has been' are expressed here in exactly the same way. Similarly, both 'was' and 'had been' are expressed in the same way, as are both 'will be' and 'will have been', and both 'would be' and 'would have been': *de auto was al gewassen* = 'the car was (had been) already washed'; *de auto zal al gewassen zijn* = 'the car will already be (have been) washed'; *de auto zou al gewassen zijn* = 'the car would already be (have been) washed'; *het werd laat* = 'it was getting late'.

CD 4 Track 13

To say that something is being done, we use *worden*: *het wordt vanavond gewassen* = 'it is being (getting) washed tonight'; *het wordt gedaan* = 'it's getting done'.

CD 4 Track 14

Summary of known verb forms: *hij repareert het* = 'he repairs / is repairing / has been repairing / will repair / will be repairing it'; *hij repareerde het* = 'he repaired it'; *hij heeft het gerepareerd* = 'he (has) repaired it'; *hij had het gerepareerd* = 'he had repaired it';



hij zal het repareren = 'he will repair it' (promise); *hij zal het gerepareerd hebben* = 'he will have repaired it'; *hij gaat het repareren* = 'he is going to repair it'; *hij zou het repareren* = 'he would / was supposed to repair it'; *hij zou het gerepareerd hebben* or *hij had het gerepareerd* = 'he would have repaired it'; *de auto wordt gerepareerd* = 'the car is being repaired'; *de auto is gerepareerd* = 'the car is / has been repaired'; *de auto was gerepareerd* = 'the car was / had been / would have been / would be repaired'; *de auto werd gerepareerd* = 'the car was being repaired'; *de auto zou gerepareerd worden* = 'the car would be (get) repaired'; *de auto zal gerepareerd worden* = 'the car will be (get) repaired'; *de auto zal al gerepareerd zijn* = 'the car will already be / have been repaired'.



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